DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 002 FL 019 579

AUTHOR Bryan, Lynne B.
TITLE Making Language Study Real: Skill Development with Authentic Language Samples.
PUB DATE 86
NOTE 11p.; In: "Perspectives on Proficiency: Curriculum & Instruction. Dimension: Language '84-'85." (see FL 019 565). p143-152.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Audiotape Recordings; Childrens Literature; Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Language Books; Higher Education; *Instructional Materials; *Language Proficiency; Language Skills; *Media Selection; *Native Speakers; *Realia; *Relevance (Education); Second Language Instruction; Skill Development
IDENTIFIERS *Authentic Materials

ABSTRACT

The use of language for real communication is of primary importance in bringing a foreign language to life for students. Native speakers can make a class come alive, and teachers should explore the possibilities for bringing exchange students and teachers into the school. Realia and foreign language children's books are also interesting to students. Authentic audio materials in particular can be used to enhance listening skills at all levels, if only to help students at the elementary level recognize what the language sounds like in normal use. In integrating authentic materials into an instructional format, it is first necessary to find out student skills and interests in order to specify objectives. Next, suitable material must be identified and its use determined. Outcomes must also be described. Increasingly, authentic audio materials are becoming generally available, and material presented aurally in a content area can also be used for language instruction. A 30-item bibliography is included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary Gaetman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED337002

FL019579

14
Making Language Study Real:
Skill Development with Authentic Language Samples

Lynne B. Bryan
Georgia Southwestern College

First of all, why is there concern with making foreign language study real? In a statement referring to students studying English in Shanghai, Johns and Davies point out that:

> Many ESL students think of the classroom as a place separate from the real world, where teachers use a special language seldom found elsewhere and discuss this language as an object for study rather than a vehicle of communication. (1981)

Johns (1985) refers to this phenomenon in a discussion of the development of materials for use in the ESL classroom. There are now many materials that do emphasize "communication," and many of us try to simulate reality in a variety of ways. It is discouraging to find that despite our many antics and teaching tricks (*à la Rassias*, etc.), we do not always succeed (Bouma, 1985). Once a graduate student of French studying at Laval University in Quebec told me that French did not become real to her until she observed that it was the language on the toothpaste tube! Her experience came after four years of French as an undergraduate and during her Masters Degree Program! Making English real to international students in the United States of course is not quite the same as teaching it in China, but even here we need to capitalize on the world around us. Teaching a foreign language (e.g., French, Spanish, or German) is analagous. Those of us who teach in large metropolitian areas have a number of resources at hand; those of us who teach in small rural communities have a difficult time making the language real. The challenge is ours.

What allows a language "to live" or "to become real" for our students? Of primary importance is the use of the language for real

2 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

communication. In such classes, we as teachers sometimes lose our anonymity and must deal with letting our students know us as real people. Speaking of real people, native speakers make a language come alive! Most of us try to invite native speakers to visit our classes: it has been my experience that the more one does to involve native speakers in classes, the more interested students become. There are many ways that this can be done, and we should explore all of the possibilities to bring exchange students and teachers into our schools and should at least identify the native speakers within commuting distance of our schools.

In addition to resource persons, we can make authentic *things* available—some of them in print form but many (like the toothpaste tube) simply items taken from everyday life. High school teachers are usually very good at having a "culture table" or "culture corner" complete with bulletin board, magazines, and all sorts of *realia*. The same kind of atmosphere should be present on the college/university level, especially since we are still teaching the beginning student.

The reluctance to put such items out in the classroom sometimes is the result of not wanting to have them "walk away." It is possible to provide those items we do not wish to lose on a checkout basis. It has been my experience, however, that most of my *realia* is returned and, although students need to be reminded to take things home with them, they become more interested once they do.

If we want to use such material optimally, it must be integrated into the language study per se. This is where the selection of materials becomes so important. Many materials are now available for purchase at our language conferences. Of the items available, some can be simply "of interest." With a little bit of thought and creativity, they can be made a part of the course. For example, a children's book of colors was "of interest" to my classes. I now *use* it as they learn the vocabulary of colors in their book. Other children's books are useful because they have a wealth of pictures in them. The key for the teacher is to find a way to complement or enhance the study of a language by *using* such materials.

One problem cited by some teachers is that such materials are considered inappropriate and are not well accepted by older students. We teachers must be devious; one tactic that has been successful for me is to present material to students and enlist their aid to critique it in terms of its content, organization, etc. Also, it is possible to ask college age students if they would use it if they were teaching a class of youngsters in which the material would be appropriate (a "role-playing" situation). Students like to be respected for their mature judgment and for their opinions.

Another question one must ask is the following. What are the possibilities that exist for the use of authentic materials? Recently the thrust

of the development of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines has been the development of tests of oral competency. It is disappointing that the emphasis has been placed on oral production and that listening comprehension was not the first skill to be considered for testing. Based on my own experience and coupled with my research readings in the field of listening comprehension, my primary emphasis would have been on listening since many students (especially ESL/EFL students) who have been trained in programs that have emphasized oral skills do not have an adequate command of listening comprehension. On more than one occasion we have probably encountered individuals who were able to mask their inability to understand by maintaining the floor and communicating in a very articulate manner with themselves! Listening is a skill that, even in one's native language, is sometimes lacking. We must, in the foreign language classroom, assist students to become "good listeners." This requires a lot of practice and appropriate material: authentic material.

The use of authentic audio materials in the elementary stages of foreign language courses is recommended. So often such material is used only with advanced learners. All students need to be exposed from the beginning to what *real* language sounds like. I am reminded of the commercial that ends: "So this is the dining room!" Hopefully, if we expose our students early on to authentic language in authentic settings, they will not be saying (when they arrive in a foreign country and hear native speakers using the language): "So this is French (or Spanish or German, etc.)!"

It may not be possible to provide a complete program for listening comprehension unless listening has been incorporated into the text material being used, at least not immediately. We can begin to supplement the provided materials, however, with a plan for the design of instruction and an understanding of the various levels of difficulty. Figure 1 provides a model for the design of instructional material, and Figure 2 depicts the scope and sequence, or difficulty levels, of materials that can be used. Many language educators have advocated the use of dictation, and in partial or total dictation exercises we can both test and teach. Currently, dictation is looked upon favorably as a technique for instruction and testing. (Stanfield, 1985).

Figure 1 provides a model designed to assist in the development of authentic materials in an instructional format. It is obvious that the first steps must be to determine the skills of the students as well as their general background and interests as we attempt to identify the specific objective of the instructional component. Next, we must identify suitable material that can be used and determine how we wish for it to be used. It is important that we consider what we will expect students to be able to do once they have

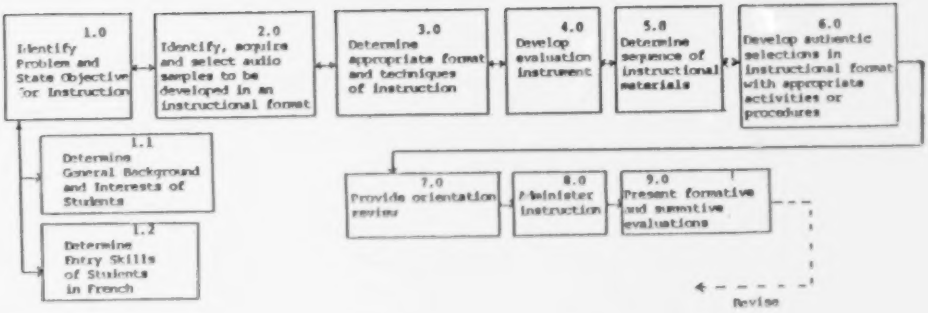

Figure 1. Model for systematic design of authentic controlled audio materials to teach listening comprehension.

c Bryan 1977

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

completed the instructional sequence *before* we develop the sequence. The double arrows indicate the option for revision and reconsideration at any point. With the development of the evaluation instrument, we should have a clear understanding of the scope and sequence of the material to be covered. Since we are considering the development of authentic audio materials in an instructional format, at this time, it is necessary to determine the readiness of the students and orient them to the dictation format and to the characteristics of natural speech. I am reminded of the international student who was experiencing great difficulty understanding what he claimed was "One word which I hear everywhere and do not understand!" He finally mustered his courage and told me what the word was: "whachuhgonna." He was amazed when I explained that it was actually five words: "what are you going to . . .!" He was unprepared for natural, everyday speech patterns of native English speakers and the phonological reductions that occur. Phonological reductions are even more prevalent in French, and I found that the use of materials such as those prepared by Pimsleur (1974) very helpful for students of French planning to work with authentic language samples. Preparation must be considered.

Figure 2 illustrates all of the different kinds of audio material: contrived materials, controlled authentic materials, authentic materials (with and without familiar subject matter). Students need to be exposed to all types, if they are to be expected to process all of them. It is suggested that, while practice and exposure might incorporate even the most difficult level, namely "Authentic Materials, which are unfamiliar to the listener," the mastery level expected and for which the students are tested may be much less demanding. It is suggested that the "scope and sequence" be used to determine their mastery level and assist the students to move to more difficult levels. It would be advantageous for the students to have as much exposure to as many levels as possible in order to become familiar with the ultimate levels. This must be done with care so that the students do not become frustrated or overwhelmed. When necessary, students should be placed *individually* with regard to the appropriatness of content of material and level of difficulty.

With the instructional development model in mind and with the "levels" of difficulty considered, we can begin to choose materials. In the category of "Controlled Authentic Materials," Walt Disney type materials spark great interest due to the expressive delivery of the narrators as they tell the *familiar* fairy tales. The use of fairy tales is advocated by a number of language educators because the content is familiar and students can guess intelligently as they listen to them or as they read them. (Meyer, 1984, and McArthur, 1975) Radio broadcasts are available on short wave and it is

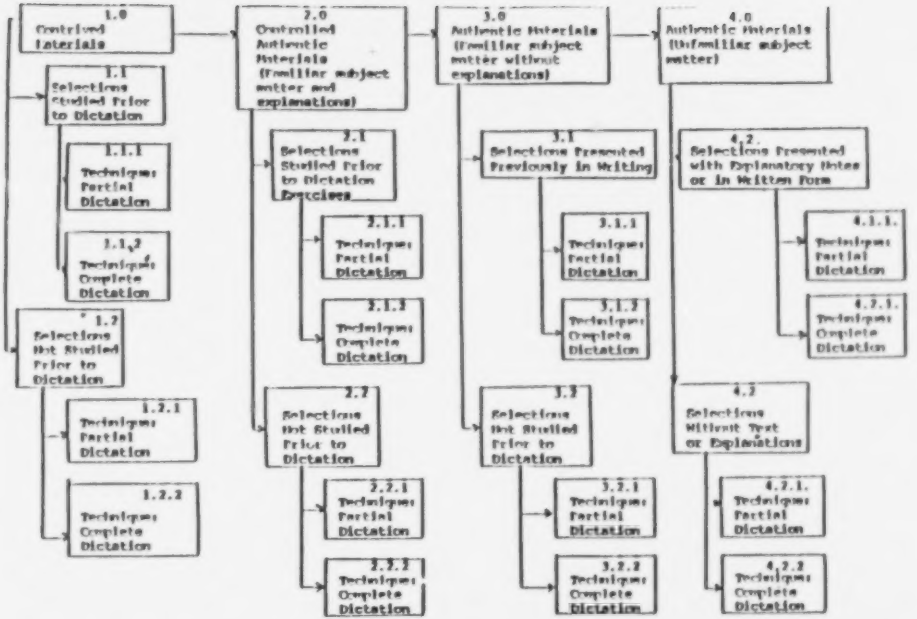

Figure 2. Suggested spectrum and sequence of material using dictation and technique for developing listening comprehension in a second language.

© Bryan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

possible to order material now from a variety of sources. The use of radio has been advocated by many. (Felt, 1973; Nelson and Wood, 1975; Seigneuret, 1972) Using radio news can be incorporated into the dictation format easily once the text has been transcribed (not always an easy task if static is present or if a dialect is present). Referring to the levels of difficulty, it is obvious that we must choose familiar topics covered in the news if we expect our students to process them before they have reached the mastery level of "Authentic Materials, unfamiliar subject matter." (Figure 2, 4.0)

In many cases, material presented aurally for instruction in a content area lends itself to adaptation for language exercises. Of course, as is true when using print material, vocabulary explanations can enable students to work with material that is linguistically more difficult than that of their language text. Along with the vocabulary explanations, any idioms, slang expressions, dialect usage, or unfamiliar grammatical forms can be explained and treated as vocabulary entries.

Authentic materials are becoming increasingly available within this country both in stores and via cable and satellite hook-ups. We must find ways to develop and distribute (legally) materials of an authentic nature that have been prepared in an instructional format and evaluated in a classroom setting. The implementation of such materials as an integral part of a language class is part of the answer to the question: "How do I make it real?" We need to share our ideas and pool our resources as a profession.

Instructional Modules

English	American Medical Association film: *New Pulse of Life* (Pyramid Films) Encore Visuals filmstrip/cassette: *Snack Facts* *Walt Disney Productions* *Fairy Tale Books with cassettes*
French	Newscast from France on Watergate Walt Disney Productions Fairy Tale Books with cassettes
Spanish:	Walt Disney Productions Fairy Tale Books with cassettes

Bibliography

Angelis, Paul J. "The Importance and Diversity of Aural Comprehension Training." *Modern Language Journal,* 57(1973):102-06.

Bartz, Walter H. and Renate A. Schulz. *Approaches to the Testing of Communicative Competence.* Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 107 108, 1974.

Belasco, Simon. "The Plateau; or the Case for Comprehension: the 'Concept' Approach." *Modern Language Journal,* 51(1967):82-83.

Bonin, Therese. "A Rationale for including Colloquial French as an Integral Part of French Language Studies." Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1972.

Bouma, Lowell. "Lament of an Aging Foreign Language Teacher Impaled on the Horns of a Reality Dilemma." *The Beacon*, 20(September, 1985):31.

Briggs, Leslie J. *Handbook of Procedures for the Design of Instruction.* Pittsburgh: American Institute for Research, 1970.

Carroll, John B. "Learning Theory for the Classroom Teacher." pp. 113-49 in Gilbert A. Jarvis, ed., *ACTFL Review of Foreign Language Education,* vol. 6. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1974.

Chastain, Kenneth. *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice.* ED 2. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976.

Duker, Sam, ed. *Listening: Readings*, New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966.

Felt, William N. "Radio in Foreign Language Teaching." *Hispania*, 58(1975):486.

Gagne, Robert M. *The Conditions of Learning.* 2nd. ed., New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970.

----------. *Essentials of Learning for Instruction.* The Principles of Educational Psychology Series. Expanded Edition. Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1975.

Hamilton, Stanley. "Using the Dictee for Aural Comprehension." *French Review* 42(1968):279-80.

Hughes, John P. "Let Us Stop Teching Imaginary Languages." *Modern Language Journal*, 32(1948):405-10.

Johns, Ann M. "Some Principles of Materials Design from the World Around Us: Authenticity, Relevancy and Challenge." *TESOL Newsletter,* 19(1985):1&7.

Johns, T. and Florence Davies. "Test as a Vehicle for Information." Lecture presented to the students of the Fulbright Program, Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute, China. 1981. (Cited in Johns,, (1985).

Libhart, Byron R. "A Neglected Challenge: The Aural Comprehension of Unfamiliar Materials." *French Review*, 43(1970):800-04.

Messec, Jerry. "Providing for Practice with Authentic Materials." Presentation at GULF-TESOL, April 1982.

Meyer, Renee. " 'Listen my children and you shall hear . . .' " *Foreign Language Annals*, 17(1984):343-44.

McArthur, James F. and John C. Carr. " 'Que vous avez de grandes oreilles': Instant Foreign Language Through Fairy Tales." *French Review*, 48(1975):1005-8.

Nelson, Robert J. and Richard E. Wood. *Radio in Foreign Language Education: CAL-ERIC/CLL Series on Languages and Linguistics,* No. 11 Arlington, VA: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 104 157, 1975.

Pimsleur, Paul. *Le pont sensore: une methode pour comprendre le français parlé*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974.

Postovsky, V. A. "Effects of Delay in Oral Practice at the Beginning of Second Language Learning." *Modern Language Journal*, 58(1974): 229-39.

Quinn, Terence and James Wheeler. Listening Comprehension in the Foreign Language Classroom: CAL-ERIC/CLL Series on Language and Linguistics, No. 16 Bethesda, MD: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 104 196, 1975.

Rivers, Wilga M. *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

----------. *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

----------. *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of Spanish*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Seigneuret, Jean Claude. " 'Ici Paris. . .' " *French Review*, 46(1972):350-53.

Stanfield, Charles W. "A History of Dictation in Foreign Language Teaching and Testing." *Modern Language Journal*, 69(1972):121-27.